HeLP serves patients of Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta and their families. To qualify, the child’s family must have an income of less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

HeLP has a lawyer onsite at each of Children’s three hospitals: Scottish Rite, Egleston and Hughes Spalding.

HeLP assists eligible clients with legal issues impeding improvement of health outcomes, in the areas of housing, family law, public benefits, education and wills and estates.

The social, economic and physical conditions in which children live can be detrimental to their health. Poor housing conditions can exacerbate health conditions like asthma. Poverty can prevent children from obtaining needed medical treatment. Children with developmental disabilities often do not get the remedial special education, therapies and other services they need.

The Health Law Partnership (HeLP) is an award winning, nationally recognized medical-legal partnership among Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, Atlanta Legal Aid Society and Georgia State Law. This interdisciplinary collaboration between lawyers and medical professionals assists low-income children in Atlanta with overcoming challenges like these and improving their overall health and wellbeing. HeLP’s activities include direct client representation, interprofessional education of students and practitioners, research on best practices and policy development.

Since its inception in 2004, HeLP has provided free civil legal services to nearly 4,000 low-income children receiving care at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta.

HeLP links direct legal services with educational programming for professionals in law, medicine, public health, bioethics, and social work in a research-based environment committed to improving the lives of children and advancing public policy.

— Sylvia Caley, Director of the Health Law Partnership, and Clinical Professor and Co-Director of the HeLP Legal Services Clinic at Georgia State Law

The knowledge gained by the professionals working together is cumulative – each assists the others to better understand our complex medical system and to better respond holistically to the needs of or patients.

— Dr. Robert Pettignano, Medical Director of the Health Law Partnership and Pediatrician at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta

HeLP has proven itself to be a model medical-legal partnership. Its work addressing the social determinants of health at the individual and systemic levels has improved the lives of children throughout Georgia.

— Leslie Wolf, Professor of Law and Director of the Center for Law, Health & Society at Georgia State Law

Children are among the most underrepresented in the legal system. HeLP fills this justice gap.

— Steve Gottlieb, Executive Director of Atlanta Legal Aid Society

The social, economic and physical conditions in which children live can be detrimental to their health. Poor housing conditions can exacerbate health conditions like asthma. Poverty can prevent children from obtaining needed medical treatment. Children with developmental disabilities often do not get the remedial special education, therapies and other services they need.
HeLP has served clients from 125 counties across Georgia. While primarily serving the metro Atlanta area, many of HeLP’s clients are from rural areas throughout Georgia with little or no access to legal assistance.

**HeLP’s CLIENTS**

- 85% Female
- 70% African-Americans
- 68% Single head of households
- 50% Income less than 100 percent of the federal poverty level ($25,000 for a family of 4)

**HeLP HAS HANDLED**

More than 5,000 cases since 2004, resulting in outcomes valued in excess of $8 million, including Social Security Income, Medicaid, food stamps, housing, educational services, skilled nursing care, and other health benefits.

**DIAGNOSES OF CHILDREN SERVED**

- Asthma
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Other (heart problems, cystic fibrosis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, kidney disease, sickle cell disease, and Down Syndrome)
- Developmental Delay
- Seizure Disorders

**EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

After a local school illegally refused to provide needed insulin shots to a diabetic child at school and told her mother to home-school her, HeLP lawyers negotiated the child’s re-entry into school.

**SAFE HOUSING**

A HeLP lawyer worked to secure safe housing for a family whose child with chronic asthma had multiple emergency department visits, triggered by mold in their apartment that the landlord refused to repair.

**GUARDIANSHIP**

HeLP lawyers assisted a grandmother to obtain guardianship of her three grandchildren following their mother’s death, which enabled her to consent to medical care for her seriously ill grandchild.

**SERVING GEORGIA**

HeLP was awarded the 2014 Outstanding MLP Award by the National Center for Medical Legal Partnership.

In 2014, the Georgia House of Representatives honored HeLP for 10 years of exemplary service to Georgia’s children.

In 2015, HeLP was awarded the American Association of Medical Colleges’ AHEAD Accelerating Health Equity, Advancing through Discovery grant.
Georgia State Law opened the HeLP Legal Services Clinic, an in-house clinic and the educational arm of HeLP in 2007.

The clinic allows law students to inhabit the role of the lawyer. They take responsibility for clients in legal matters while under the close supervision and guidance of a faculty member. As a result, students experience the practice of law before they graduate and develop skills such as client interviewing, counseling and representation, as well as negotiation, research, drafting and case management.

The clinic also provides the unique opportunity to work in an interprofessional team. Medical students and residents from Morehouse School of Medicine and Emory University School of Medicine, as well as graduate students of public health, social work and bioethics from Georgia State and other universities participate in the clinic. Bringing together professionals with different training and experience teaches collaborative, interdisciplinary problem solving and reflective practice, which enhances client services.

Students experience the practice of law before they graduate and develop skills such as client interviewing, counseling and representation, negotiation, research and drafting, and case management.

Students interested in learning more about the HeLP Legal Services Clinic and how to apply should visit law.gsu.edu/helpclinic.
The primary premise underlying the Health Law Partnership (HeLP) among Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, and Georgia State Law is that attorneys’ involvement can alter the underlying physical, social and economic environments in which many low-income children live and improve children’s quality of life.

— Charity Scott, Co-founder of the Health Law Partnership and Catherine C. Henson Professor of Law at Georgia State Law